

TESTIMONY OF JESSICA GORSKI
Maryland WISE Women, Legislative Huddle Facilitator
IN SUPPORT OF HB 1460, HB 1491, & HB 1495
Anti-Gerrymandering of Maryland's Congressional
and Legislative Districts
BEFORE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE

Chairwoman Ann Healey and Members of the House Rules & Executive Nominations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1460, HB 1491 and HB 1495 , proposing amendments to the Maryland Constitution to require congressional and legislative districts to conform to certain standards, to prohibit the accounting for certain information relating to the voting history and party affiliation of certain individuals, and to require that due regard be given to natural boundaries and boundaries of political subdivisions; and submitting the amendment to the qualified voters of the State for their adoption or rejection. My name is Jessica Gorski and I am the Legislative Huddle Facilitator for Maryland WISE Women, an organization of over 800 women in Anne Arundel County. I also represent WISE as a member organization of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC), a group of 40 grassroots organizations consisting of over 30,000 Marylanders statewide. We strongly encourage favorable reports for HB 1460, HB 1491 and HB 1495. Gerrymandering is simply voter suppression and it needs to end now.

In a democracy, we are supposed to choose our elected representatives. However, in some instances, through sophisticated partisan gerrymandering tactics, our representatives are really choosing their voters. Election Day is when we get to have our say, and we need to reform the rules so every vote matters. Arguably, the gerrymandering designs of North Carolina and Maryland are the most egregious examples in which elected officials made 'no bones about' an intent to discriminate against disfavored voters and create unfair maps. If we are going to fight for fair voting rights for all voters we need to first take a look at our voting districts and ask are these examples of "packing and cracking" or they a fair representation of a contingent area? We cannot cry foul when arguing against another state's practices such as Georgia,

with their blatant voter suppression tactics used during the 2018 Gubernatorial race, and not address Maryland's current Rorschach inspired congressional districts and recognize our own culpability in voter fraud.

What issues do our legislators have with these bills? Every Maryland citizen deserves the right to register and vote. Why are those in power worried about taking politics out of redistricting and actually allowing voters to decide who will represent them rather than those in power deciding who will elect them? If we want to tout that we have a fair democracy in Maryland then we need to stop the current egregious gerrymandering practices and redistrict in a way that reflects current changes in population and ensure that every Marylander is fairly represented. I urge you to vote today for those who votes are not being heard and return favorable reports for HB 1460, HB 1491 and HB 1495. Thank you.